

AN ASSESSMENT OF THE PHILIPPINE COUNTERINSURGENCY
OPERATIONAL METHODOLOGY

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MASTER OF MILITARY ART AND SCIENCE
General Studies

by

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The opinions and conclusions expressed herein are those of the student author and do not necessarily represent the views of the U.S. Army Command and General Staff College or any other governmental agency. (References to this study should include the foregoing statement.)

ABSTRACT

AN ASSESSMENT OF THE PHILIPPINE COUNTERINSURGENCY OPERATIONAL METHODOLOGY, by LTC Roy T Devesa, 84 pages.

The roots of the Philippine communist insurgency problem are multidimensional, encompassing political and socioeconomic dimensions. The Arroyo administration recognized this when it formulated the National Internal Security Plan (NISP) in 2001. The NISP developed the Strategy of Holistic Approach (SHA) with the following components: 1) legal, diplomatic and political; 2) peace and order and security; 3) socioeconomic and psychosocial; and 4) information. The SHA involves the mobilization of the whole government bureaucracy from the national down to the regional and local levels to address the different aspects of the communist insurgency problem including its root causes. The NISP intends to implement the SHA in four phases called Clear-Hold-Consolidate-Develop (C-H-C-D). This study attempts to examine the government's success so far in implementing the C-H-C-D operational methodology.

The government still shows interest in pursuing the series of peace negotiations the two parties have been conducting on and off for a long time. But although CPP negotiators sit with the government there is yet no indication until this time that the CPP has any genuine interest in settling differences with the government peacefully.

Meanwhile, military efforts to neutralize the insurgents fall short on their own targets. There is a greater need for the military to intensify intelligence and combat operations to effectively reduce insurgency strength and incapacitate its politico-military building capability. Rather than concentrate in clearing villages the military should focus on thwarting the insurgents' efforts to expand its mass base operations and establish guerrilla fronts.

The military and civilian defense forces' shortcomings in military and civil-military operations are some of the main obstacles in effectively countering the expansion campaign of the insurgents. However, the main obstacle to attaining a strategic victory against the insurgents is the failure to mobilize and orchestrate the efforts of the whole government bureaucracy, particularly the civilian agencies, to institute socioeconomic programs that would address the roots of discontent.

In most cases all four C-H-C-D phases cannot be carried out to full execution for lack of a comprehensive plan, programs and projects to support it. Neither is there an effective system of coordination and integration of government efforts by the different departments. The Government's Strategy of Holistic Approach seems to be a viable plan, but it has to be implemented in its real sense before its effectiveness and efficiency can be judged.

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ACRONYMS

AFP	Armed Forces of the Philippines
BIN	<i>Barangay</i> Intelligence Net
CAA	CAFGU Active Auxiliary
CAFGU	Civilian Armed Forces Geographical Unit
COC-IS	Cabinet Oversight Committee-Internal Security
CPP	Communist Party of the Philippines
C-H-C-D	Clear-Hold-Consolidate-Develop
CMO	Civil Military Operations
CORD	Cabinet Officer for Regional Development
CVO	Civilian Volunteer Organization
GF	Guerrilla Front
ITDS	Integrated Territorial Defense System
JI	Jameah Islamiya
KALAHI-CIDSS	<i>Kapitbisig Laban sa Kahirapan</i> – Comprehensive and Integrated Delivery of Social Services
LGU	Local Government Unit
MILF	Moro Islamic Liberation Front
MNLF	Moro National Liberation Front
NISP	National Internal Security Plan
NPA	New Peoples Army
NCRC	National Capital Region Command
NDF	National Democratic Front
OCIS	Oversight Committee on Internal Security

PKP-HUK	<i>Partido Komunista ng Pilipinas-Hukbo ng Bayan Laban sa Hapon</i>
SHA	Strategy of Holistic Approach
SOT	Special Operations Team
SYP	<i>Samahang Yunit Propaganda</i>

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

Strategy is one of the urgent needs of the Armed Forces of the Philippines at present. But practicable, realistic and suitable strategy is a most difficult thing to develop. It cannot simply be the result of wishful thinking nor can it be plucked out of the blue. It cannot be merely copied from military science manuals. Neither can it be just transferred from one ally to another. (1989, 19)

Victor Corpus, *The Silent War*

The Setting

The Philippines, an archipelagic country in Southeast Asia, was geographically insulated from the turmoil and conflict which plagued the Southeast Asia mainland during the decades after World War II and, as such, encountered no direct external threat. But the challenges to the country's democracy surfaced from within. Since regaining its independence in 1946, the country has been beset by a series of insurgencies, some of which persist to the present day.

Political and socioeconomic realities in the republic induce the growth of insurgency. The concentration of wealth and power in the hands of a few has alienated and impoverished millions of citizens, especially at the grassroots. Electoral politics, essentially nonideological and opportunistic, offer little hope for the masses. With no substantive difference between platforms of the major political parties, elections often end up as popularity and muckraking contests between administration and opposition candidates. Alliances are very fluid, with politicians casually shifting political parties whenever they deem it advantageous to do so. Politicians, mostly rich and landed,

typically protect their own interests, rather than advance long-overdue economic and social reforms that would lift millions of their countrymen out of poverty.

Much of the country's socioeconomic and political maladies could be traced to its colonial past. As aptly stated by Morales, "The colonizers ultimately left the Philippines in the hands of an elite group cultivated by them, so that post-colonial Philippines much resembled colonial Philippines, only without foreign rule" (2003).

While many of its neighbors have achieved economic growth as "Asian Tigers," the Philippines has remained largely agricultural (despite the recent surge in the services sector) with infrastructure inadequate to spur industrialization. Even government support to agriculture has proven too little to make farming a viable source of income. A lot of the government's economic development programs has either not been implemented efficiently or has not been implemented at all.

The government itself direly needs widespread reforms. Corruption pervades the bureaucracy, diverting a big chunk of government funds intended for public projects and services to private pockets. The London-based Transparency International listed the Philippines as number 11 among 146 countries in its 2004 ranking of most corrupt nations (*Philippine Star*, 21 October 2004). For the last two years, the Philippines has been sharing the eleventh position with Eritrea, Papua New Guinea, Uganda, Vietnam, and Zambia.

Corruption has weakened the legitimacy of at least two government administrations. Denunciations by a significant sector of Philippine society led to the overthrow of the Marcos and Estrada regimes by means of "People Power" revolutions in 1986 and 2001, respectively. However, despite four administration changes in the last

nineteen years, significant reforms to uplift marginalized sectors have failed. As a result, feelings of hopelessness and despair have engulfed many Filipinos.

Basic services, such as education, nutrition and health, and housing, are beyond the reach of the masses in underdeveloped rural areas and in urban centers where many poor people converge to seek opportunities. Overly centralized development has resulted in a high-unemployment rate that is forcing many Filipinos to look for jobs overseas. Despite the government's agrarian reform program, land distribution remains quite skewed. As of 2003, 24.7 percent of the population or four million Filipino families still live below the poverty line (Virola, Ignacio, Amoranto, and Balamban 2005, 8).

Amidst these realities, several insurgent and secessionist groups have surfaced in the country. The Moro Islamic Liberation Front (MILF) has continued its armed struggle mainly in the southern island of Mindanao with the aim of seceding from the Philippines and declaring an independent Islamic state. Formed in 1977, the MILF split from the Moro National Liberation Front (MNLF) as the latter started to advocate a moderate and reconciliatory approach toward the government after fighting for five years. In 1987, the MNLF signed a peace agreement with the Philippine Government and accepted the legitimacy of the Autonomous Region for Muslim Mindanao, which gives a number of predominantly Muslim provinces a measure of self-government. The MILF refused to accept the accord and persisted in fighting the government.

This secessionist threat in the south was exacerbated by the emergence of a local Muslim extremist group, the Abu Sayyaf, in 1991. The group, which has been linked with foreign terrorist groups Jemaah Islamiyah (JI) and the Al Qaeda, was responsible for a series of high-profile kidnappings of foreigners and locals in the southwestern islands,

bombings of commercial and populated areas, and the extortion and massacre of innocent civilians, among other atrocities. Numbering just 400 to 700, this group has gained significant national and international notoriety.

The Government is also exposed to the threat of rightist groups, composed of active and retired members of the military who have forged alliances with political opposition groups. Although not deemed to be too serious, the threat from what is regarded as military adventurism by misguided elements can be dangerous during economic downturns and political crises when the government is vulnerable to destabilization and coup attempts.

Among the different rebel groups, however, the local communist movement remains the biggest threat to national security because of its nationwide presence and strength. In addition, even as the communists adhere to violence and terror as means to achieve their objectives, they enjoy above-ground support from leftist groups.

Background of the Problem

The Communist Party of the Philippines (CPP) and its armed wing, the New People's Army (NPA), have been waging a guerrilla war since 1967 with the ultimate objective of overthrowing the Philippine Government and imposing communist rule.

From a small group of armed fighters in the 1970s, the CPP/NPA grew in strength to around 20,000 in 1986, as Filipinos became increasingly disaffected with the dictatorial and corrupt Marcos regime.

The counterinsurgency strategists at that time mainly employed "search and destroy" operations, based on the South Vietnamese archetype. Government forces also conducted "left-hand efforts," consisting of civil-military operations activities, like

medical-dental missions, infrastructure development, and the like. But these efforts, already diluted by scarce funds and the preeminence of the military solution in defense doctrine, proved ineffectual in the face of political repression and military abuses by the Marcos dictatorship.

Corazon Aquino's assumption of the presidency in 1986 paved the way for a better overall political environment and policy changes in dealing with the insurgency problem, among others. The Aquino administration inspired the return of faith and confidence in the government. Political and military reforms were instituted and the government initiated multisectoral efforts to uplift the economic condition of the masses. Unfortunately, the impending economic takeoff was aborted by a series of coup attempts by right-wing forces which felt that Aquino was too accommodating to the left.

Nevertheless, the Aquino administration engendered enough goodwill to deflate the communist momentum. Illustrative of this is the case of Bernabe Buscayno (a.k.a. Kumander Dante, the top NPA officer), one of the political prisoners (along with CCP Chairman Jose Ma. Sison) set free by Aquino, who renounced the armed struggle and formed a cooperative in Tarlac. With its adversarial stance softened, the CCP/NPA and the National Democratic Front (NDF) eventually agreed to talk peace with the administration of President Fidel Ramos, who succeeded Aquino in 1992.

By 1994, the strength of the CPP/NPA was reduced by 80 percent to just 5,000 armed regulars. Communist-affected areas also declined by 95 percent from around 8,500 villages in 1986 to 450 villages in 1995.

Perhaps thinking that the CPP/NPA decline was an irreversible trend, the government transferred responsibility for insurgency problem management from the

Armed Forces to the Philippine National Police in 1996. This was a blunder. Seeing the government's guard down, the CPP/NPA launched an intensified recruitment and recovery program. Feeding on the people's impatience with the slow pace of reforms in the face of unchanged--if not deteriorating--socioeconomic conditions in the countryside, the CPP/NPA started to rebound.

Alarmed at the increasing strength and influence of the CPP/NPA from 1998 to 2001, the government laid out a comprehensive security and defense program known as the National Internal Security Plan (NISP) in 2001. The NISP may be the first evidence of success for the military in convincing the government that insurgency is a complex problem and requires a comprehensive solution involving all the agencies of the government. The NISP formalizes the Strategy of Holistic Approach (SHA), which divided counterinsurgency efforts among the different government departments, using the Clear-Hold-Consolidate-Develop (C-H-C-D) concept.

However, since the inception of the National Internal Security Plan in 2001, the government has yet to strike a decisive blow against the communist insurgency. Up to now, the insurgents can undertake successful tactical offensives against government forces when the opportunity presents itself. They also continue to recruit and train new members in the countryside. As of 2003, it is estimated that the CPP/NPA has around 8,000 full-time members.

Military analysts believe that the Holistic Approach is still the most viable strategy in dealing with the communist insurgency. But, in their view, the SHA has not yielded its full benefits due to certain flaws in the way some of its major programs had been carried out.

The CPP/NPA's persistence as a principal threat to national security over a relatively long period of time suggests weakness in the government's counterinsurgency strategy and/or its implementation. This thesis endeavors to study the various programs and means by which the C-H-C-D concept is being applied, along with their practical effects, to rate their impact and efficiency.

The Research Question

The thesis assessed the Philippine Government's counterinsurgency programs to address the local communist threat. In particular, it looked into the effectiveness of the three major government programs in the C-H-C-D operational methodology by examining how they are actually implemented and the accomplishments made so far by the counterinsurgency forces. The following are the research questions of the study:

1. What is the nature and current state of the communist insurgency in the Philippines?
2. What is the present government strategy to counter communist insurgency?
3. What is the operational methodology being used by the Philippine government to implement the strategy?
4. What are the main government programs, military and economic, that support the counterinsurgency efforts?
 - a. Where are the priority areas for the implementation of these operations and programs/projects and how effective are they?
5. What has been accomplished by the counterinsurgency campaign in terms of the following:

- a. Neutralized guerrilla fronts and/or villages cleared of rebel influence
(insurgents' political and military organizations)
- b. Local defense systems established
- c. Socioeconomic programs undertaken

Assumptions

The author made three assumptions in this study:

1. The Strategy of Holistic Approach is a viable and effective strategy in dealing specifically with the communist insurgents in the Philippines.
2. The effectiveness of the government strategy to address insurgency can be measured through a number of indicators, such as: (a) number of villages cleared; (b) number of new CPP/NPA-affected villages; (c) number of villages cleared but reverted back to CPP/NPA's influence; (d) number of guerrilla fronts; (e) number of priority fronts; (f) number of influenced-villages within the priority fronts; (g) criteria for identifying priority fronts; (h) military target goals in relation to number of influenced-villages cleared; (i) number of battalions deployed in NPA affected areas; (j) number of SOT-trained personnel in a battalion; (k) number of battalions with SOT capability; (l) number of existing CAFGUs; (m) number of CAFGUs installed in newly cleared areas; (n) length of transition period from one phase to the other in the Clear-Hold-Consolidate-Develop stages; (o) number of projects put up through the KALAHI-CIDSS per year; (p) number of projects put up in cleared, held and consolidated influenced-villages; (q) number of projects put up in cleared but not held (by CAFGUs) in influenced-villages; (r) number of projects put up in influenced-villages not yet cleared by the military; and (s) number of projects put up in villages not influenced by the CPP/NPA.

3. There will be no significant or dramatic political and economic changes in the Philippines that will lead to the sudden defeat or decline of the communist insurgency.

Definition of Terms

The following terminologies that will be used in the study are defined hereunder:

Campaign Strategy. Military commander's long-range plans and policies using the resources available to him to achieve specific and assigned objectives.

Cleared Villages. Villages where the CPP/NPA formerly exerted influence but which have been neutralized by the military. Both CPP/NPA political and military infrastructures must have been dismantled for villages to be declared as "cleared villages."

Communist Threat. Threat posed by the CPP/NPA to Philippine national security.

Counterinsurgency. Operations and activities conducted by the government against insurgent forces.

CPP/NPA-Affected Villages. Villages in the Philippines where the CPP/NPA has established influence through the organization of CPP/NPA political units.

Guerrilla Front. A politico-military geographical unit of the CPP/NPA which consists of a political organization called Front Committee, a military organization called Front Guerrilla Unit and a territory or area of operations consisting of three to five municipalities. The number of villages in a municipality usually depends on its total population.

Insurgency. A form of rebellion in which a dissident faction instigates the commission of acts of civil disobedience, sabotage and terrorism, and wages irregular

warfare in order to overthrow a government or to break the integrity of a nation's territory.

Internal Security Operations. Refers to all military and police operations against the different internal security threats in the Philippines.

National Military Strategy. Philippine government's long range plans using the armed forces to achieve its objectives. It contains the strategic environment, national military objectives, elements of strategy and strategic concepts, and the forces required in confronting defined security threats to the country.

Special Operations Team. A military team capable of conducting intelligence, security and civil-military operations. The Special Operations Team is composed of psychological operations (PSYOPS), intelligence, security and stay-behind personnel.

Strategy. Refers to the plans implemented by the government against external and internal threats of the country. It outlines the "ways" and "means" by which the government will pursue or accomplish the objectives (ends).

Limitations

One of the main limitations to the study was access to official documents. Some of the data required to make a more comprehensive analysis of the problem and relevant issues and details are not accessible. Some current military operational accomplishments and reports are still being withheld for security and other reasons. Another is constraints in distance and time which prevented the author from doing an all-inclusive research on the topic at hand.

The author, however, believes that despite these limitations meaningful research is still attainable. Contacts were established with some government agencies, especially

offices in the Armed Forces of the Philippines, and these proved to be very helpful in facilitating requests for information. Also, with the help of friends and former co-workers, the conduct of survey was made possible.

Further, the author believes that the study is important and useful not only for the Philippines but for other countries which are contending with insurgency as well.

Delimitations

The scope of the study is limited to the evaluation of the principal programs of the lead government agencies participating in the government's counterinsurgency effort. Three flagship programs--the Armed Forces' Special Operations Team in the Clear phase, the CAFGU program in the Hold phase, and the KALAH-CIDSS program in the Develop phase--are the main inputs to the operational methodology under study.

The period covered by the study on the Clear and Hold phases is from the year 2001 to 2003. The year 2001 was a good starting point since this was the year the NISP was signed by President Gloria Macapagal Arroyo. On the other hand, the period covered by the study on KALAH-CIDSS begins in January 2003, when the program was launched. Seemingly, no specific national economic program existed before this period particularly designed to address the Develop phase of the methodology. It should be noted, however, that prior to KALAH-CIDSS the Armed Forces carried out limited interventions in the Develop phase, especially in areas where the military represented the only government presence, apart from the village captain, known or seen by the villagers.

Due to time constraints, the survey was conducted only among military officers of the Armed Forces. The respondents are junior and field-grade officers who have served

or are currently serving as company commanders, battalion commanders, and staff officers in battalion- up to division-level headquarters.

Significance of the Study

The Philippine Government has been contending with communist insurgency for 38 years. Two to three generations of Filipinos fighting on different sides has torn the nation apart and stunted socioeconomic growth. The influence of communist insurgency in a particular village, municipality, province or region directly affects the economy, way of life and future of the people in the affected communities. The entry of investments to stir up business, employment, and development to these areas is held back because communist insurgents are dangerous to deal with. Delivery of basic services is likewise made difficult, compromising the health, education, and general well-being of citizens and their children and consigning them to a vicious cycle of despair.

The economy and the lives of 80 million Filipinos will certainly improve if the government would be able to run an effective and steady machinery against communist insurgency. The overall effort must be seen and felt through a solid, organized, and systematic implementation of the strategy.

Although the government counterinsurgency strategy is continually being monitored and evaluated, in-depth assessments of the major programs and how they are being implemented are few. Data generated by the study will contribute to a better understanding of the effectiveness or efficiency in the implementation of the SHA strategy, as undertaken by the government in general and by the Armed Forces in particular. In doing so, the thesis will contribute to the body of knowledge on military art and science. More important, the study may help the Philippine government in

administering counterinsurgency programs that will end the longest-running communist insurgency in Asia. Further, the lessons learned from this study might be able to help other countries facing similar insurgency problems whenever the geographic, socioeconomic, and political conditions prevailing might be common to those of the Philippines.

Methodology

The thesis utilized the descriptive-evaluative research design to analyze and assess the major counterinsurgency programs as to their effectiveness in addressing the communist insurgency. Patterns and highlights of the implementation of the SOT, CAFGU, and KALAH-CIDSS through the Clear-Hold-Consolidate-Develop operational methodology were distinguished.

The study mainly used secondary techniques of data collection through content analysis of various narrative documents and statistical records, such as books, articles, theses and assessment reports, among others. Using data from field reports, the study analyzed the accomplishments of the three major programs by comparing what has actually been done by the implementing agencies in carrying out their target goals during the period in review. Deficiencies and deviations were also analyzed to determine the reasons for such, and the impact of these deficiencies and deviations on the other major programs of the whole operational methodology.

As a primary technique in data gathering, the author also conducted a survey using a questionnaire (see appendix A) to find out the views of military officers on the effectiveness of the operational methodology. Interviews with three battalion commanders were also conducted (see appendix B). The results of the survey and

interviews helped validate some of the inferences made by the author based on the available data gathered, considering that these military officers have had extensive firsthand experience in the field.

CHAPTER 2

LITERATURE REVIEW

There are a number of resource materials which contributed relevant information to this thesis. These materials can be categorized into three broad topic areas: (1) books and studies on communist insurgencies and how governments of different countries, such as Thailand, Vietnam, Malaysia, El Salvador and Peru, have dealt with them; (2) books, studies, and documents discussing the nature and development of communist insurgency in the Philippines; and (3) documents and reports of the Philippine government counterinsurgency strategies, policies, and plans.

The following are the materials used by this author with a brief description of their study.

Assessment of Counterinsurgency Strategies

The book *Defeating Communist Insurgency: The Lessons of Malaya and Vietnam* by Sir Robert Thompson discusses the basic principles of counterinsurgency and describes how these principles were used in countering insurgencies in Malaysia and Vietnam. The book explains the importance not only of knowing these principles but also of knowing how to apply them. Thompson describes how Vietnam, despite using some of the principles of counterinsurgency, failed because the methods used were ineffective and, therefore, did not produce the desired results.

The book of Dr. Thomas A. Marks, a British national, entitled *Maoist Insurgency Since Vietnam* is most important in understanding insurgency and counterinsurgency. Combining academic research with his own eyewitness account, Dr. Marks endeavors to

comprehend not only about the communist's "people's war" and counterinsurgency but also the factors which make for a revolutionary situation. One whole chapter of the book specifically deals with communist insurgency in the Philippines and Dr. Marks' analysis of the other factors, besides positive government counterinsurgency responses, that led to the decline of the CPP/NPA in the late 1980s.

Silent War, a book by retired Brigadier General Victor N. Corpus of the Philippine Army, was published in 1989. It has become a blueprint of the Armed Forces of Philippines counterinsurgency campaign plans. The ideas contained in the book are highly regarded as invaluable insights because they were drawn from the personal experience of the author. As a junior officer in the elite Philippine Constabulary unit, Corpus defected to the CPP in 1970 and became instrumental in building up the NPA. Six year later, he got disillusioned with the communist movement and surrendered to the government. He was imprisoned for ten years.

Corpus was released from prison after Marcos was ousted from power in 1986. Later, Corpus was reinstated in the military and became a central force in reorienting the Philippine counterinsurgency efforts away from predominantly military operations toward greater emphasis on socioeconomic-political development. In fact, Corpus was instrumental in the adoption of the "holistic approach" strategy and the inclusion therein of the "Clear-Hold-Consolidate-Develop" operational methodology.

Adhering to Sun Tzu's tenets of "knowing the enemy" and "knowing ourselves," Corpus gives an overview of the strategy and tactics of the NPA and then assesses not only the strategy and tactics of the Armed Forces, but also its organizational capabilities and their implications on counterinsurgency operations. Then he proposes a master plan

for a Philippine counterinsurgency strategy, much of which advocates his idea of holistic methods in adopting strategic, operational, and tactical concepts in the national government and military campaign plans. Corpus, further stresses that military action alone will never solve the insurgency problem in the Philippines and recommends the institution of an overall government program to address the root causes of insurgency.

Also, a paper published in 1999 by the Policy and Strategy Office of the National Security Council (NSC) titled, *Counter-Insurgency Strategies: Learning From The Experiences of Selected Countries* makes a good reference for this thesis. It is a reference paper published by the NSC as an input to policy and strategy formulation at the strategic level. It summarizes the lessons learned from the experiences of other countries including Thailand, Vietnam, Malaysia, El Salvador, and Peru and their implications to the Philippine counterinsurgency strategy. Among the highlights of the paper are the following:

1. Political and military solutions to insurgency should be accompanied by sustained socioeconomic programs to be successful.
2. Military solution alone usually leads to a protracted guerrilla war.
3. Military solution with sustained socioeconomic programs can also work, but also at the expense of democratization.
4. Suppression of sentiments or civil liberties as part of the counterinsurgency strategy may be effective in the short run but only strengthens and builds up antigovernment resistance in the long run.
5. Government excesses, such as graft and corruption, undermine the progress of any counterinsurgency strategy.

6. Sincere and fast implementation of any peace agreement is very crucial for the attainment of lasting peace.

7. Strong political will is needed in implementing the political and socioeconomic programs that are designed to address the root causes of insurgency.

The article of Professor Gaudiosio Sosmena of the National Defense College of the Philippines titled *Insurgency vs. Counterinsurgency: The Challenge of Winning* provides a good framework for analyzing counterinsurgency strategies. To put the topic in context, Sosmena first tries to define the nature and types of insurgencies in general and then examines the socioeconomic and political environment in which insurgency in the Philippines exists. Sosmena then suggests that to make the government's 'holistic approach' strategy more effective some essential political and social elements also have to be in place, such as enlightened political leaders, responsive bureaucracy, community empowerment, justice, accountability and transparency in the government.

The thesis of Philippine Army Colonel Anacleto Arque Jr., in 1991, titled "Assessment of the Special Operations Team Concept as Counterinsurgency Strategy in Region 3 and 6" analyzes the attitudes and perceptions of the SOT operators toward the Special Operations Team concept. Arque's study is about determining whether the attitudes and perceptions of the SOT operators have any bearing on the relatively low performance output of the SOT units in said regions. From the results of the survey conducted among SOT operators and local officials, Arque concludes that the low output in the conduct of SOT operations does not lie in the attitude and perception of the operators. On the contrary, the findings show that operators and local officials generally

have favorable attitudes toward the SOT concept. Arque recommends that further study be conducted on the other aspects of the SOT.

Other pertinent studies compare the strengths and weaknesses of the Philippine government strategy with those of the revolutionary strategy of the CPP/NPA. Others analyze the different aspects of the government strategy such as the national leadership's will and ability to use the elements of national power, government infrastructures, operational concepts and methodologies, programs and resources, and other factors having impact on the growth and resiliency of the communist insurgency.

Literature on CPP/NPA

The four-volume study *The Reestablished Communist Party of the Philippines* published by the Intelligence Service of the Philippines provides a good background on the history, strategy and tactics of the CPP/NPA. The books trace the roots of the present CPP/NPA to the original Communist Party of the Philippines (Party) established by Crisanto Evangelista in the 1930s and discuss significant developments in the Party's history up to the period immediately following the 1986 "People Power" revolution. As such, the book serves as a repository of data for comprehensive analysis of the CPP/NPA during said period.

The four volumes correspond to four stages based on significant turning points in the Party's history. The first volume discusses the introduction of communism as a political ideology in the Philippines in the 1930s and its development until 1967. It includes a vital, detailed discussion of the nature, characteristics and development of CPP/NPA theories, principles, ideology, strategy, and programs of action. The second

volume illustrates the Party's development during the period from 1968-1972, when the Philippines was suffering from heavy political and economic difficulties.

The third volume covers the period from 1972 when Marcos declared Martial Law until the holding of the Snap Presidential election on 7 February 1986. It discusses the maturity of the Party vis-à-vis the sociopolitical climate at that time. This period saw the formation of the National Democratic Front.

The fourth volume discusses the decline of the CPP/NPA under the new political climate ushered in by the 1986 "People Power" revolution. The replacement of the twenty-year dictatorship of Marcos by a democratic government under the popular leadership of Corazon Aquino inspired hope for a better future. The CPP/NPA started to lose its mass base support in the countryside as the party was left without a major propaganda campaign against the new government. Its failure to participate in the revolution to oust Marcos was, to the Party, one of its most serious mistakes.

The thesis of Colonel Ricardo C. Morales of the Philippine Army, "Perpetual Wars: The Philippine Insurgencies" sheds light on the other dimensions of insurgency in the Philippines. The thesis, produced in December 2003, gives a brief account of the history of insurgencies in the Philippines from the Spanish colonial period up to the present. The thesis analyzes the reasons why the communist and Muslim insurgencies were able not only to survive but to recover from setbacks suffered from government counterinsurgency campaigns.

Morales discusses the response of the government to the insurgency problem, along with the strategy of the rebels and the intervention of third parties, to partly explain

the resiliency of the insurgencies. He credits the adoption of the “protracted people’s war” concept as one of the main reasons for the resiliency of the CPP/NPA.

Morales also gives a general analysis of the strategy adopted by the government to address the insurgency problem. He argues that the government’s strategy, particularly the “fight-and-develop strategy,” is flawed and contributes significantly to the persistence of the problem. He further argues that the military effort lacks weight and decisiveness in defeating the rebel armed groups. On the other hand, Morales also faults the government’s implementation of long-term economic programs like the Comprehensive Agrarian Reform Program (CARP), which, if properly carried out, could have deflated peasant sector unrest. He finds CARP inadequate, considering that the size of distributable land is insufficient for a large and growing number of farmer beneficiaries. At the same time, he decries the slow pace of land distribution, which is often delayed by legal obstructions put up by the rich landowners.

Government Policy Documents and Accomplishment Reports

There are several policy documents dealing with government strategies in addressing the communist insurgency problem in the Philippines. One of these documents is the National Internal Security Plan (NISP) crafted by the Cabinet Oversight Committee on Internal Security (COC-IS) in 2001. The NISP provides the strategic guidance, policies, general framework for coordination and integration of government response, and the methodology in the implementation of operational concepts and plans.

The NISP expounds on the strategic concepts of the government’s Strategy of Holistic Approach (SHA), a comprehensive and multidisciplinary approach to deter and resolve insurgency. It also describes the four components of SHA: (1) Political/Legal/

Diplomatic, (2) Socioeconomic/Psychosocial, (3) Peace and Order/Security, and (4) Information. These components consist of appropriate responses designed to overcome the varying intensities of insurgencies nationwide.

The NISP describes the framework for coordinating and integrating efforts by the different government agencies participating in the counterinsurgency effort. The operational methodology of Clear-Hold-Consolidate-Develop is also explained in this document.

The supplemental handbook for the Armed Forces Campaign Plan *Bantay-Laya* (English translation, “Guarding Freedom”) prepared by the Office of the Deputy Chief of Staff for Operations in 2004 expounds the Armed Forces strategies and operational concepts, more particularly the SOT concept, in dealing with different security threats. It also contains a comprehensive and realistic description of the different threat groups.

CHAPTER 3

COMMUNIST INSURGENCY

The Philippine communist insurgency is rooted in the country's colonial past and a system of political domination and social inequality that have perpetuated elitist rule, which has left millions of Filipinos languishing in poverty. It is no wonder then that the CPP/NPA persists as the biggest threat to the security of the nation.

The Beginnings of the Communist Party of the Philippines

The growth of the international communist movement in the 1920s presented what seemed like a far better alternative to the highly skewed socioeconomic and political system prevalent in the Philippines. Communism found interest among certain sectors, particularly intellectuals, peasants in Central Luzon and laborers in Manila. Inspired by the Comintern, the local communist party *Partido Komunista ng Pilipinas* (PKP) was founded on 7 November 1938 as a result of the merger of several socialist organizations existing in the Philippines at that time. Its objective was to overthrow the reigning government, seize state power and replace it with a socialist system (*The Reestablished Communist Party of the Philippines*, Volume 1 [1989], 25-26).

In 1941, the Japanese invaded the Philippines. This event would have a significant impact on the communist movement in the country. During the war, the PKP organized a well-knit guerrilla movement against the Japanese called the *Hukbo ng Bayan Laban sa Hapon* (HUK), which would fight alongside American and Filipino resistance forces. It was during this period that the PKP saw the potential of using the HUK in recruiting people to the communist insurgency. At every opportunity, the HUK

conducted lectures among the masses on communism. Thus, an effort was started to make each HUK soldier a propagandist (*Handbook on the Communist Party of the Philippines* [1961], 17).

After the war, the PKP redirected its struggle against the government. By 1950, PKP leader Jose Lava, who thought that the political and economic condition of the country had been deteriorating, declared that a revolutionary situation existed and the PKP should plan for an "early seizure of power." The PKP then embarked on an ambitious policy of massive recruitment and immediately set off large-scale attacks against government forces. But Lava had apparently misread the prevailing conditions, and overlooked the weaknesses of the communist organization. Soon the PKP found itself reeling from bad coordination, poorly trained recruits, inadequate logistics and internal wrangling among party leaders. After the arrest of several Party leaders, the PKP was unable to recover from these serious setbacks. It became a dormant movement until December 1974 when the PKP/HUK leadership returned to the fold of the law. Since then, the party has channeled its struggle along a peaceful path.

The Emergence of the Reestablished CPP

The Communist Party of the Philippines (CPP) was "reestablished" during the late 1960s after serious differences surfaced among leaders and members of the PKP on ideological principles and the main strategic and tactical directions of the struggle. As a result of the gaping schism among party leaders, Jose Maria Sison and a handful of young revolutionaries broke up with the PKP and founded the CPP in Central Luzon on 26 December 1968. The new CPP that emerged was more radical and called for a new type of national democratic revolution against alleged US imperialism and domestic

feudalism. In 1968, the NPA was formed to serve as the military arm of the CPP and its principal tool in waging the national democratic revolution.

The Protracted People's War

Unlike the PKP which used the October Revolution in Russia as the model for its struggle, the CPP subscribed to the teachings of Mao Tse Tung. The CPP followed Mao's theory of agrarian, peasant-initiated armed struggle or the protracted people's war (PPW). Two factors may have made Maoist theory appealing to the CPP. First, most of the founding members of the CPP received their education on communism in China. Second, the CPP leaders may have found the theory suited to the conditions existing in the Philippines, which had a basically agricultural and "semi-feudal" society where the majority of the people are poor landless peasants.

The CPP believes that by agitating and mobilizing the entire citizenry to take up arms, they can overthrow the government. The geographical makeup of the Philippines also favors adopting the strategic PPW principle of "encircling the cities from the countryside." Numerous mountain ranges and forests also provide stable guerrilla bases in the countryside from where the revolutionaries could advance toward the urban centers to seize political power.

The CPP/NPA is committed to armed struggle, and building a strong communist army has been one of its immediate concerns. Being a much smaller force compared with the Armed Forces, the CPP/NPA adopts the tactic of concentration, dispersal and shifting of forces. The CPP/NPA concentrates its forces to conduct tactical offensives, disperses its forces to conduct mass work, and shifts forces to evade enemy offensives. By

employing these tactics, it hopes to build both its mass base and an insurgent army strong enough to defeat the military.

The NPA adheres to Mao's 16-character formula which states that “when enemy advances, we retreat; when the enemy camps, we harass; when the enemy tires, we attack; and, when the enemy withdraws, we pursue.” The NPA is also guided by Mao's dictum “concentrate a superior force to destroy the enemy one by one” (Corpus 1989, 61-76). To avoid being constricted, and at the same time expand its mass base without much pressure from the Armed Forces, the CPP/NPA is dispersing its guerrilla elements in different parts of the Philippines. This forces the Armed Forces to spread itself thinly, making its forces vulnerable to NPA attacks.

In adhering to the principles of People's Protracted War, the CPP has recognized that it may take a long period of time in order to tilt the balance of forces in favor of the Party. It expects the NPA to undergo three strategic stages: strategic defensive stage, strategic stalemate stage and strategic offensive stage. At the strategic defensive stage, the NPA is militarily weaker than the government forces. The stage is further divided into two sub-stages: early and advanced. In the strategic stalemate stage, the NPA should achieve at least a degree of parity with the government forces, while in the strategic offensive stage, the NPA should have gained relative superiority over the government forces, making it capable of launching large-scale offensives against the military in the urban centers and big camp fortifications.

The CPP/NPA has assessed that its armed struggle is at the strategic defensive stage. More specifically the NPA finds itself at the early sub-stage, amid the process of accumulating strength to be able to win bigger battles and campaigns in the next stage of

the people's war. This stage is characterized by the conduct of small-scale tactical offensives while aggressively undertaking mass-organizing work in the countryside.

Establishment of Guerrilla Fronts

To be able to “encircle the cities from the countryside,” the CPP/NPA strives to set up as many guerrilla base areas or guerrilla fronts in the countryside as it can.

Guerrilla fronts are areas in the countryside consisting of several villages (*barangay* or *barrio*), covering two or more contiguous towns or provinces where the CPP/NPA has established influence through local CPP/NPA chapters and mass organizations typically belonging to the labor, peasant, youth and women sectors. Base areas are important to the CPP because these are where the party draws its strength. Guerrilla bases serve as their staging areas when conducting armed attacks against government forces and when committing atrocities. These bases also provide the CPP/NPA mobility corridors and safe havens. These guerrilla fronts are critical to their survival because they serve as sustainment and training bases. Strong mass support in guerrilla bases provide the insurgents with people who can serve as militia and lookouts.

To expand its guerrilla fronts, the CPP had developed a step-by-step approach in building up basic mass organizations or Party units in the villages. The approach involves the infiltration and organization of the local populace of targeted villages. The main steps of the approach are 1) establishment of initial contacts and 2) organizing groups. The groups are organized into committees, solid mass associations, party branches, people's militia and *barrio* (village) revolutionary committees. The creation of a *barrio* revolutionary committee signals the existence of a CPP/NPA shadow government in the locality.

The Legal Struggle

Aside from armed struggle, the party carries out legal struggle as a secondary form of struggle to advance the national democratic revolution. This struggle is mainly waged in the cities or urban centers. In its legal struggle, the CPP puts special emphasis on united-front building. The united front is the unity of all revolutionary classes and strata to isolate the government forces politically and psychologically.

The National Democratic Front (NDF) was formed in April 1973 to serve as the CPP's main tool for united-front building. The NDF also solicits international support for the CPP from other communist organizations abroad. It also serves as the mouthpiece of communist propaganda and ideals in a bid to mobilize the people's support for the revolution.

In united-front building, the NDF establishes linkages with other domestic progressive and opposition forces to build the broadest possible unity against the government. To facilitate such linkages, the CPP/NDF has organized its so-called national democratic underground mass organizations to infiltrate and organize the students/youth, peasants, labor, professionals, women, indigenous peoples, church communities and other sectors of Philippine society. These underground organizations are responsible for establishing legal and allied front groups that would support the CPP's overall objective. The legal front groups intend to arouse, organize and mobilize all sectors of society against the government. Through the conduct of strikes, rallies and other forms of mass actions, the legal fronts hope to agitate citizens to become distrustful of the government and to eventually support the CPP/NPA's armed struggle.

Aside from united-front building, the legal struggle also includes overseas revolutionary work, parliamentary struggle and engaging the government in peace negotiations.

Overseas revolutionary work primarily involves conducting agitation-propaganda and fund-raising campaigns. The goal is to isolate the Philippine government politically and economically from other countries, while developing the broadest political and material support for the Party.

The front groups doing work overseas solicit funds from foreign and international development organizations through project proposals. The projects are made to appear legitimate and intended for the development of the marginalized sectors to facilitate approval. Usually, 40 percent of the grant goes to the “legal project” while 60 percent goes to the CPP/NPA. Of the insurgents’ share, 60 percent goes to the central committee and 40 percent to the party organ that initiates the project.

The Overseas revolutionary work is directly under the CPP’s International Department. The Department had already established Country Committees in the United States-Canada, Europe, Asia-Pacific, Middle East-Africa and Latin America; and Support Groups in Saudi Arabia, Japan, Hong Kong, China, and Australia.

The peace negotiations have also increasingly become an important part of the party’s legal struggle. The CPP’s participation in the peace talks is not contemplated to arrive at a negotiated settlement of the Party’s conflict with the government. “The Party engages in the peace talks to gain maximum concessions from the government, to attain a status of belligerency and to buy time to consolidate and strengthen its forces” (Año 2003, 19). It is during the peace talks, while Party leaders seem to be negotiating with

government representatives, when Party operatives actually facilitate their plans.

Consequently, the peace talks have not achieved significant results and have been on an “on and off” status since they were initiated in 1986.

As a matter of principle, the CPP/NPA does not believe in elections. It has asserted that the “electoral process is like joining a game or contest in which the rules and regulations are...in favor of the ruling class” (*The Reestablished Communist Party of the Philippines Volume 3* [1989], 31-32). However, with the success of its front organizations led by the *Bayan Muna*, which got elected in Congress as party-list representative in the 2001 and 2004 elections, the Party has affirmed that parliamentary works and electoral struggle are “parts and extension of the legal movement” and indirectly support the armed struggle. The Party has stated that its waging of parliamentary struggle is a “practice of the revolutionary dual tactics” (*Analysis of CTM’s Entry into Electoral struggle* [2004], 8).

CPP/NPA Decline in the Late 1980s

From a small group of 3,000 armed fighters in the 1970s, it dramatically rose to around 20,000 by 1986 mainly due to the people’s discontent with the Marcos rule and the increasing abuses perpetrated by the Armed Forces. Political repression and worsening economic conditions under Martial Law fueled the CPP/NPA’s rapid growth.

With the collapse of the Marcos regime after a peaceful “People Power” revolution in 1986, however, the strength of the NPA started to decline. The CPP reached its lowest in terms of membership at around 6,000; firearms at 5,000; and affected villages at 400 in 1995. This reduction may have been caused by the change in the people’s mood after the new government revived their hopes and assuaged feelings of

discontent and distrust, which fueled the NPA rebellion. Further, during this period the Soviet Union collapsed discrediting communism as a viable ideology.

Along with the improved domestic political situation and loss of credibility of the communist ideology, another important accomplishment of the Aquino administration had been the reformation of the Armed Forces of the Philippines, which significantly minimized the violation of human rights. Also, the Armed Forces made critical changes in its campaign against insurgency. It focused increasingly on civil-military operations in conjunction with intelligence and combat operations. It is worth noting that one of the pillars of its civil-military operations is Value Formation, an activity intended to improve the values of both the individual soldiers and military organization as a whole.

The Resurgence of the CPP/NPA

Because of the setbacks suffered by the Party after the 1986 People Power Revolution, CPP Chairman Jose Maria Sison embarked on a rectification campaign with the CPP/NPA with the objective of implementing effective changes in the revolutionary effort. Guided by the document entitled “Reaffirm our Basic Principles and Rectify Errors,” the Party rethought its ideological, political, organizational and mass work at that time. As part of this rectification campaign, a massive purging of suspected government deep-penetration agents within the Party was carried out. This, however, only forced more of its members to desert the organization or to surrender.

Despite these setbacks, the CPP/NPA would prove to be a resilient insurgent organization. Part of its strength is its highly developed and refined organizational structures and mechanisms of control (Marks 1996). Having existed for three decades, it has politically organized a mass base in both rural and urban areas. These strengths,

coupled with “back to basics” strategy of mass-organizing work, the CPP gradually recovered on all fronts from 1996 onwards. The repeal of Republic Act 1700 or the Anti-Subversion Law and the drastic reduction in the number of local civilian defense force members (CAFGUs) guarding their communities also contributed to the resurgence of the CPP/NPA.

By the end the year 2000, CPP/NPA strength was placed at around 11,000; firearms at 7,000; and affected of villages, 1,000.

CHAPTER 4

GOVERNMENT RESPONSE

The Charismatic President

The Philippine government's suppression of the communist insurgency led by the PKP/HUK between 1946 and 1954 is often cited as a model of effective counterinsurgency policy. This was largely attributed to Ramon Magsaysay, who was appointed Defense Secretary in 1950 and elected President in 1953. Often described as the “Charismatic President,” Magsaysay instituted significant internal defense and development programs. He was able to harness the entire government bureaucracy to support his programs through his personal sincerity and character, making coordination and integration of counterinsurgency programs seem effortless. Magsaysay improved morale in the armed forces, emphasized small-unit operations, and reduced corruption. He also dismissed incompetent and corrupt army officers, and worked at ensuring honest elections. During his administration, resettlement areas for surrendered and captured HUKs were established under the Economic Development Corps program.

Martial Law and the Deterioration of Security Forces

Although the PKP/HUK was defeated in the 1950s, the continued inequality in Philippine society and the influence of communism as an ideological and political force resulted in the emergence of a new CPP led by Sison and other radical young intellectuals. Because of the effectiveness of the counterinsurgency strategy employed under the Magsaysay administration, succeeding efforts included a mix of military and socioeconomic initiatives involving the different government agencies.

The Marcos administration counterinsurgency campaign before and right after the declaration of Martial Law looked good at first. It emphasized civic action. Under the aegis of the Home Defense Program, military units started to construct roads and schools, provided disaster relief, assisted in maintaining security and public utilities, and performed law enforcement duties. Army engineer units played a key role in these development efforts in the countryside. The Armed Forces took part in literacy projects and the government's National Livelihood Program designed to improve the standard of living in rural areas.

Initially, the programs seemed viable, and attempts to implement them should have produced positive results. But the country was still plagued with social and economic problems. The Marcos family and their cronies' insatiable hunger for power and possessions wrought havoc on the country. The government coffers were plundered by corrupt officials, civil liberties were curtailed, injustices--such as violation of property rights--had been commonplace, and a culture of cronyism and nepotism pervaded the system of public administration. To worsen matters, abusive factions of the military trampled on the rights of the civilians and enforced political repression. People were subjected to constant maltreatment and lived in fear under the domination of the military whose human rights violations seemed to escalate unstoppably.

Human rights groups documented numerous instances of grave offenses and serious crimes among Martial Law enforcers. These included unlawful arrest and detention, torture, rape and salvaging a euphemism for assassination of suspects and detainees. Most victims were suspected insurgents or their supporters. Public respect for the military eroded, while relations between the Armed Forces and important sectors of

society, such as the Catholic Church, deteriorated. Joining the CPP/NPA movement had been an alternative for many who wanted to escape from--or to seek revenge against--the military. Twenty years of Marcos rule helped the CPP/NPA in their recruitment efforts.

A Policy of Reconciliation and Military Reforms

The Aquino administration adopted a multi-level and multi-dimensional approach in addressing the issue of insurgency. It managed to mitigate the insurgency problem through a combination of efforts in the fields of politics, information dissemination, security and socioeconomic reforms which it referred to as a holistic approach. Moreover, the new administration pursued a policy of reconciliation. It released all political prisoners including CPP/NPA leaders Jose Maria Sison, NPA Commander Bernabe Buscayno. The government also enforced a sixty-day ceasefire in order that rebels could come home to their families without fear of being arrested, and initiated the first of a long-running series of peace talks. The government implemented *Balik-Baril* (Surrender of Firearms) program whereby it encouraged the surrender of firearms by insurgents in exchange for money, livelihood project support and amnesty.

The government also empowered the people with the restoration of civil liberties and the return of control of community affairs to the civilian local government units. Significantly, reforms in the military were instituted. Modules on Respect for Human Rights were incorporated in regular military courses for officers and enlisted personnel. Weekly Value Formation sessions for all soldiers were also required of all unit commanders.

The Armed Forces, a breakaway faction of which played a key role in accelerating the collapse of the Marcos regime through a “People Power” revolution,

became a vital agent for socioeconomic development and national security in the broadest sense. Along this line, the military formulated campaign plan *Lambat-Bitag* (Net-Trap) in 1988, wherein it introduced the concept of Clear-Hold-Consolidate-Develop as a methodology in combating insurgency.

Even as the government envisioned rallying the different departments of the government to effect holistic reforms, it was essentially the military which tried to carry out whatever endeavor its resources may permit it in performing the C-H-C-D. For instance, the military would conduct dental-medical missions, teach children and adults in remote villages (through the Army Literacy Patrol System), contribute funds for burying a dead member of the community, and repair village roads, schools and markets. It also engaged in information dissemination through seminars on how to put up a cooperative, among others.

Significantly, after six years since the implementation of this new approach, coupled with the improved political conditions and new hopes for the Filipinos of a better life after Marcos, and the CPP/NPA's own mistakes, the strength of the CPP/NPA was reduced from a high of more than 25,000 in 1987 to around 5,000 members in 1994. Likewise, communist-affected villages in the countryside were reduced from a peak of around 8,500 villages in 1986 to only 450 villages in 1995.

The Government Looked at Another Direction

The decline of the local communist threat somewhat lulled the government and the military into complacency. In 1996, the primary role of undertaking internal security operations, including threats from the CPP/NPA, was transferred to the National Police, as the Armed Forces wanted to focus toward addressing external threats to the

Philippines. This move by the government was a bit hasty and not well thought out. First, the National Police was not prepared to handle the problem of insurgency. Since its creation in 1992 as a national civilian police organization, the National Police has been preoccupied with problems of criminalities, drugs, kidnappings and other syndicated crimes, and as such, had been detached from the counterinsurgency efforts of the government. Second, the Armed Forces which wanted to gear its modernization program toward external defense had no immediate external threat that merited greater security concern than the internal insurgency problem.

Then, the government and the Armed Forces got busy with problems with the MILF and the Abu Sayyaf Group. The counterinsurgency efforts against the CPP/NPA took the back seat as they lost the government's focus of attention. On the other hand, the rising cost of living, unemployment, weak delivery of public services, and everyday hardships made some people lose trust and hope in the government.

Search for a New Approach

In 1996, the CPP/NPA started to embark on an intensified rectification campaign in a relatively uncontested fashion. Soon, it was able to regain some lost ground and posted an annual average increase of 35 percent in manpower from 1995 to 2001.

The resurgence of the communist threat prompted the government to return the internal security responsibilities to the Armed Forces. New anti-insurgency campaign plans patterned after *Lambat-Bitag* were formulated and executed but they were largely unsuccessful in arresting the upsurge of the CPP/NPA. The Armed Forces seemed to have lost its momentum after a two-year respite from conducting counterinsurgency operations, allowing the CPP/NPA to gain strength. In 2001, the government saw the

need for a revitalized campaign against the communist insurgents. President Gloria Macapagal Arroyo issued Executive Order Nr. 21 S-2001 creating the National Internal Security Plan.

The Plan prescribes the general framework and provides policy guidelines for coordinating, integrating, and accelerating overall government response to address insurgency and other threats to national security. It emphasizes unity of effort, use of intelligence, conduct of public information campaigns and good governance. It also provides direction, assigns roles, defines responsibilities and establishes relationships of the different government agencies to ensure consistency, efficiency and conformity in the formulation and implementation of national security policies, plans and programs.

The Strategy of Holistic Approach

The SHA consists of four major components: (1) political-legal-diplomatic; (2) socioeconomic-psychosocial; 3) peace and order-security; and (4) information, which cuts across the three other components.

1. Political Component. The Political Component seeks to tap the full cooperation of local government units and civil society groups to promote good governance and citizens' participation in local peace initiatives. It promotes political reforms and institutional development to strengthen democratic institutions and to empower the people. This component also includes legal actions against the insurgents and diplomatic efforts to deny foreign support to the CPP/NPA. The lead convenor of this component is the Department of the Interior and Local Government with the Department of National Defense/Armed Forces of the Philippines, Department of Justice, Department of Foreign

Affairs, Office of the Presidential Adviser on the Peace Process, and Office of the Presidential Adviser on Regional Development, as partners.

2. Socioeconomic and Psychosocial Component. This component is concerned with eradicating or alleviating poverty and meeting development needs, especially in areas of conflict. It involves acceleration of development programs to build up human capital. It includes psychosocial interventions that take into consideration the cultural, ethno-linguistic, religious diversity and deep historical roots of armed conflicts. The lead convenor of this component is the Department of Social Welfare and Development with the National Anti-Poverty Commission, National Economic Development Authority, Department of Health, Department of Education, Department of Agriculture, Department of Agrarian Reform, Department of Public Works and Highways, as partners.

3. Peace and Order/Security Component. This component mainly includes the Armed Forces' internal security operations or counterinsurgency campaign to directly address the insurgent party, its army and mass organization, and the armed conflict itself through clearing and holding operations. The lead convenor of this component is the Department of National Defense with the Department of Interior and Local Government and the Office of the National Security Adviser, as partners.

4. Information Component. This component refers to the overall effort to advocate peace, promote public confidence in government and support government efforts to overcome insurgency through tri-media and interpersonal approaches. It also includes efforts to counter insurgent propaganda and other psychological actions. The lead convenor of the information component is the Office of the Press Secretary with the National Anti Poverty Commission, Department of Social Welfare and Development,

Department of National Defense and Office of the Presidential Adviser on the Peace Process, as partners.

Rationale of the Strategy

Insurgents utilize both armed and political struggles in exploiting poverty, ignorance, injustice and other ills of society which are present in most places of the country. Government inaction or neglect allows these seeds of insurgency to be nurtured and to grow into trees of discontent. Social inequality and failure of the government are seen as some of the strong forces driving people to take up arms and fight the government. The government recognizes that, to address the insurgency problem, government response should be unconventional and multi-dimensional.

Operational Methodology

The methodology for the implementation of the NISP is the Clear-Hold-Consolidate-Develop (C-H-C-D) operational methodology. It is executed in stages with the aim of dismantling insurgent politico-military infrastructures in the countryside and establishing government control and authority in contested areas to eventually pave the way for development. Its overlapping and interrelated stages may be conducted sequentially or simultaneously, depending on the prevailing situation in an area.

The Clear stage involves the conduct of the triad operations of combat, intelligence and civil-military operations, designed to defeat the insurgent armed groups and to neutralize the insurgents' politico-military infrastructures in targeted priority fronts. It involves the "gradual constriction" of the guerrilla front by the Armed Forces and the National Police mobile forces, with the aim of gaining possession or control of

strategic areas or key terrain to allow holding forces to come in for the next stage or operation.

The Hold stage aims to reestablish government control and authority, and to preserve the initial gains of the clearing forces through occupation and control of the cleared areas. This stage signals the strengthening of the local defense capability through the Integrated Territorial Defense System (ITDS). The establishment of the defense system is intended to secure cleared areas from the re-entry or incursions of armed groups.

The Consolidation stage involves the collaborative participation of the military, police, civil government agencies, and the people themselves to strengthen and consolidate government control and authority. This stage includes stepping up activities meant to assist concerned local government units in the delivery of basic services and gaining the people's trust and confidence. The people in the government interact with the community such that they will be bound collectively building confidence in themselves to act in self-defense against insurgent threats and to strongly assert the control and authority of the government over them and their community.

The Develop stage involves the implementation of the government's socioeconomic, psychosocial and political reforms and includes the sustained delivery of basic services to the people to address the root causes of insurgency. The government will bring to the community tangible changes that will affect or transform their lives.

The roles of the military and police are focused on the Clear and Hold stages, and assume supportive roles during the Consolidation and Develop stages. On the other hand,

other line agencies shall support the military and the police during the clear and hold stages, but shall take the lead role in the consolidation and develop stages.

Integrated Territorial Defense System

The Integrated Territorial Defense System seeks to establish an effective defense and security system that will defend communities, protect the people and secure vital installations and national assets. It has three main components: 1) National Police territorial forces; 2) Armed Forces with the CAGU Active Auxiliary; and 3) Local Government Units with the Civilian Volunteer Organizations. The establishment of the defense system starts during the Holding stage of the C-H-C-D methodology after the military and police forces have cleared a village of CPP/NPA influence. The government forces together with the CAGUs will protect the local community from depredations of the CPP/NPA. Civilian Volunteer Organizations are organized to constitute the unarmed component of the local defense forces.

The AFP's Campaign Plan Bantay Laya

In response to the NISP, the Armed Forces has formulated the Internal Security Operations Plan *Bantay Laya* (Guardian of Freedom). The Plan guides the action of the military from 2002 to 2006 in undertaking its role outlined in the NISP. Its strategic goal is to decisively defeat the NPA in order to attain and maintain peace for national development.

The Armed Forces conducts operations in the Clearing stage, applying the SOT concept by utilizing combat, intelligence and psychological operations. Combat operations target the CPP/NPA's guerrilla fronts, its operational centers of gravity. The

center of gravity is “the driving force that expands and unifies (CPP/NPA) control and influence at the grassroots level” (*Analysis and Assessment of SOT Operations* [2004], 64). Thus, to the Armed Forces the destruction of the guerrilla fronts will eventually lead to the collapse of the CPP/NPA.

The first phase of the SOT is the preparation by SOT personnel for immersion in the target village by familiarizing themselves with the people, community and situation through area study prepared by intelligence units. In Phase 2, the SOT coordinates with the local officials of the target village, conducts dialogues with the local populace, performs civil-military operations (CMO) and intelligence activities. The SOT eats, sleeps and lives with the community. Psychological operations are conducted targeting suspected or known members of local CPP political structures. While conducting its activities, the SOT concentrates on reorienting and convincing members of the community to have confidence in the government and to denounce communist influence. During this phase, public awareness of the government developmental efforts is emphasized while evils of communism are exposed. In the next phase, the SOT coordinates the conduct of low-cost, hi-impact projects through civic actions by the military or the local government units, or both. In the last phase, the SOT turns over the project to the local officials and undergoes reorientation for new immersion.

At the Hold stage, establishment of CAFGU Active Auxiliary companies will immediately follow after a village has been cleared of CPP/NPA influence. Prospective members of the CAFGUs will be recruited from the village that has been cleared. As part of the defense system, *Barangay* Information Networks (BINs) are established. The BINs are composed of two or more informants clandestinely recruited from the local populace

to serve as the eyes and ears of the military in the villages. The Philippine Army provides the administrative requirements to the CAFGUs to include logistics, funds, training and communications equipment.

For the Consolidate and Develop stages, the *Bantay Laya* provides that the Armed Forces undertake non-traditional roles to assist other government agencies in implementing socioeconomic development programs. This includes providing security to government and non-government agencies in the delivery of basic services in conflict areas. The military will also assist in the organization of cause-oriented groups and people's organizations. To win the support of the people in the community and gain their cooperation, the military is set to provide assistance in any means possible. This way the people's sympathy for the CPP/NPA will be turned around in its favor.

Arm-In-Arm in the Fight Against Poverty

The Develop stage entails the implementation of socioeconomic reforms and programs to help improve the quality of life of the people in rural villages. So far, in 2002 the Department of Social Welfare and Development, launched the *Kapit-Bisig Laban sa Kahirapan* (KALAHI) Comprehensive and Integrated Delivery for Social Services (CIDSS) Project (translated as Arm In Arm In the Fight Against Poverty) which in a way benefits the development of some identified CPP/NPA-affected villages. The KALAHI-CIDSS aims to empower community members through enhanced participation in local governance and involvement in the design, implementation, and management of development activities which focuses on reducing of poverty. Development is brought to the community by putting up an enterprise or public utility like an irrigation system, rice mill or electric cooperative depending on what particular need the community may have

to bring about development and change. The military provides a supporting role in this program by giving socioeconomic information about a target area.

Mechanism for Coordination and Integration

Critical to the implementation of the NISP is the effective and efficient synchronization of efforts and responses of the entire government machinery to overcome insurgency. To achieve this, there is a need for interagency coordination to forge the vital link between the security, socioeconomic psychosocial, and political entities of the government, at the national and local levels.

At the national level, the Cabinet Oversight Committee on Internal Security (COC-IS) is tasked with ensuring the coordination and integration of all government efforts in the implementation of the NISP. The National Peace and Order Council and the Development Council Systems complement the COC-IS. The Executive Secretary chairs the COC-IS with the Secretary of National Defense as vice-chairman and other Cabinet secretaries as members.

At the Regional level, the mechanism for coordination and integration is through the Cabinet Officer for Regional Development (CORD) system, pursuant to administrative order No. 34 dated 02 May 2002. The CORD, in coordination with local officials, identifies the concerns of his or her assigned region so that these could be articulated at the national level through the COC-IS. The CORD also ensures that all programs and projects of the national government are implemented in his area.

At the local level, Area Coordination Centers are established to serve as nerve centers for collaborative action and points of contact between and among concerned agencies and departments at these levels. These coordination centers are institutionalized

to provide a 24-hour communication facility to undertake monitoring functions for the COC-IS. At the municipal level, the centers are established and maintained by local chief executives or the mayors.

CHAPTER 5

ANALYSIS

The primary role of the Armed Forces in the SHA is clearing CPP/NPA-affected villages. The Armed Forces is not unfamiliar with this mission. In the middle of the 1980s, under campaign plan *Lambat Bitag*, the Armed Forces conducted SOTs in its clearing operations with relative success.

Under the NISP, the Armed Forces conceptualized the *Bantay Laya* campaign with essentially the same principles of clearing as its predecessor SOT. This time under a different political climate and with destabilization efforts coming from political opponents and some sectors in society, the Armed Forces SOT will have to pass a different test.

Clear Phase

Figure 1 and table 1 show the progress of the Armed Forces in implementing the clearing of CPP/NPA-affected villages in the years 2002 and 2003.

As of 31 December 2001, there were 1,969 affected villages all over the country. It increased by 22 percent, or an additional 427 villages were affected by the communist insurgents as of 31 December 2002. In 2003, despite the efforts of the Armed Forces the insurgents posted an increase of 4 percent or 94 affected villages.

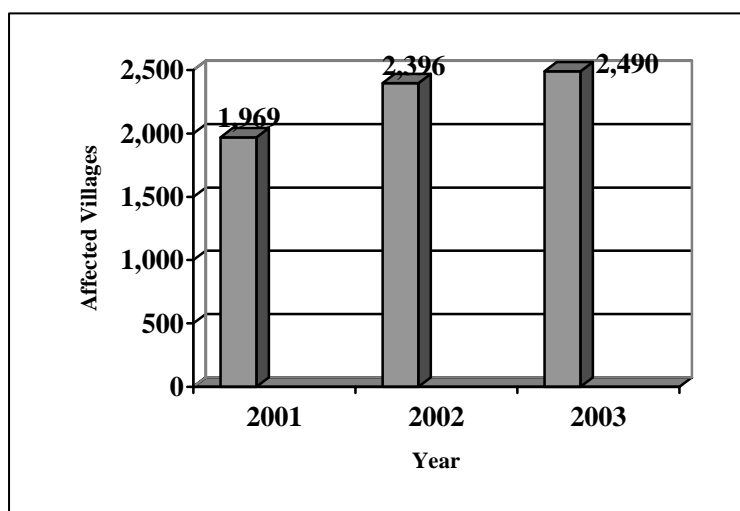


Figure 1. Trend in CPP/NPA-Affected Villages

Source: Analysis and Assessment of CY 2002-2003 SOT Operations (Philippines: 2004).

Table 1. Cleared CPP-Affected Villages by Area								
Year	Northern and Central Luzon		Southern Luzon		Visayas		Mindanao	
	Affected	Cleared	Affected	Cleared	Affected	Cleared	Affected	Cleared
2001	308	6	594	0	681	0	386	13
2002	463	82	772	162	618	160	541	92
2003	428	26	775	120	697	65	590	35

Source: Analysis and Assessment of CY 2002-2003 SOT Operations (Philippines: 2004).

A close look at Table 1 will show not only the number of affected and cleared villages as of the end of years 2002 and 2003. But the number of villages actually put under influence by the CPP/NPA through its expansion effort in the years 2002 and 2003 can also be derived from it.

The number of affected villages by the end of 2002 is practically also the number of affected villages beginning in 2003 which becomes the subject of clearing operations by the Armed Forces for the year 2003. This number, less the number of cleared villages

by the end of 2003, will reflect the number of remaining affected villages that were not cleared in 2003. Now, this number, when subtracted from the current number of insurgent affected villages posted by the military as of the end of year 2003 will give the actual number of villages recently affected by the CPP/NPA for the whole of 2003. To illustrate, in Southern Luzon at the beginning of 2003 there were 772 affected villages, the Armed Forces cleared 120 villages which would have brought the number of affected villages to 652, but since by the end of 2003 the affected villages in Southern Luzon still counted 775, that would mean that the insurgents had influenced anew and or recovered previously cleared ones, a total of 123 villages in addition to the 612 left uncleared.

Thus, in Southern Luzon while the Armed Forces cleared 120 villages the communist insurgents affected 123 new villages. In the Visayas, the Armed Forces cleared 65 villages, but the communist insurgents influenced an additional 144, while in Mindanao the military cleared 35, but the insurgents affected 84 more than the previous year. The figures show that the total number of villages affected by the insurgents for the year 2003 in the three areas is 351, while the military cleared 246 affected villages, meaning the insurgents increased the number of affected villages by 105 more than the military cleared. In so far as Northern and Central Luzon is concerned, for the year 2003, the military cleared 26 affected villages and still the number of affected villages by the end of the year compared to its beginning figure showed that they were reduced by a total of 35 or nine villages more than the military had cleared. The seeming positive figure was a result of the CPP/NPA shifting its expansion efforts from Northern and Central Luzon to Southern Luzon, the Visayas and Mindanao.

On the other hand, in 2001 the military cleared only 19 villages in all the islands. This low figure might be due to adjustments being done at the time since it was the first year the NISP took effect and the military had to conform its operations according to its roles envisioned in the NISP including conducting SOT as a means to implement the clearing phase. The number of villages affected by the insurgents in 2001 cannot be derived from the data above because there is no figure available for the year 2000.

Meanwhile, in 2002 the Armed Forces cleared a total of 496 villages in all the four main geographical subdivisions, but applying the formula used above to get the number of villages affected by the insurgents for the year, it appears that the insurgents outdid the military in influencing villages. On top of what had been cleared, the insurgents increased the number of villages as follows: 237 in Northern and Central Luzon; 340 in Southern Luzon; 97 in the Visayas; and, 247 in Mindanao. It shows that the insurgents added 921 affected villages even as the military cleared 496 villages.

The Armed Forces' assessment for calendar year 2004 states that the military conducted a total of 625 SOTs in 2004, but it did not provide figures on the actual number of villages declared cleared nor the number of affected villages as of that year.

No clear trend emerges on the military's clearing operations. While it cleared 496 in 2002 as compared to 19 in 2001, in 2003 it cleared only 246. On the other hand, the number of villages affected by the insurgents after clearing is growing each year and it can be surmised from the trend that this is also likely to be true in the year 2004.

The Need for Active Counter-Mobilization Program

As it is today, although the Armed Forces performs combat operations, its primary role in implementing the government counterinsurgency plan principally focuses

in clearing operations of affected villages through SOT. On the other hand, the NISP, the military or any other involved government Department have no comprehensive programs to prevent the entry or re-entry and expansion by CPP/NPA operations in unaffected or threatened villages and unprotected previously cleared ones. In its C-H-C-D method of implementing the Strategy of Holistic Approach to combat insurgency, the government has not included a specific counter-mobilization program, which it appears should be given equal importance as a counterinsurgency measure as clearing is.

The figures above demonstrate that while the Armed Forces is busy with SOT to clear affected villages, the communist insurgents are almost free to enter their target villages to conduct teach-ins and recruitment activities. This results in the increase of CPP/NPA-affected villages despite the clearing efforts of the military. Not only do the insurgents neutralize the efforts of the military to reduce affected villages by adding new ones but they are able to surpass the accomplishment of the Armed Forces.

A counter-expansion program to be implemented in threatened and unaffected villages can have the effect of curtailing the increase of CPP/NPA-affected villages. It should be considered as a direct counterinsurgency effort since the expansion of communist insurgents to unaffected villages increases the CPP/NPA political mass base, guerrilla fronts and its regular military strength.

What is also advantageous about having a counter-expansion measure is the expediency by which it can be done compared to the tediousness of an SOT clearing operation, while both would accomplish the purpose of freeing the village of insurgents influence. Also, it will lessen the burden on the Armed Forces to conduct more and more

SOT year after year, since the clearing of affected villages coupled with the prevention of the insurgents to expand will result in the decrease of CPP/NPA-affected villages.

Table 1 also shows that in Northern and Central Luzon Regions, while the Armed Forces cleared only 26 villages in 2003, the number of affected village further declined by 9. While it does not conclusively show that the insurgents did not in fact influence a new village, it would mean that they had fewer activities in Northern and Central Luzon.

The CPP/NPA strategy is to expand to Visayas and Mindanao since in the recent past the Armed Forces has been more active in conducting search and destroy operations in Luzon while they focus on the Abu Sayyaf Group and Moro Islamic Liberation Front in Mindanao. The current CPP/NPA effort is to expand its mass base and to build up strength and political work like united front building and legal political participation. The insurgents currently avoid direct military confrontations since they do not have enough armed strength to defeat the Armed Forces by armed confrontation and to avert casualties.

Dismantling a Guerrilla Front

Despite clearing 496 affected villages in 2002 and 246 in 2003 (table 2), the CPP/NPA posted an increase of five guerrilla fronts in 2002 and one in 2003.

Table 2. CPP/NPA-Affected Villages					
Year	Total Affected Villages	Total No. of SOT Operations	Cleared Villages	% Cleared Villages as against Total	Success Rate of SOT Operations
2002	2,396	501	496	21%	99%
2003	2,490	450	246	10%	55%

Source: Analysis and Assessment of CY 2002-2003 SOT Operations (Philippines: 2004).

A guerrilla front (GF) constitutes 9 or more CPP/NPA-affected villages usually located within the boundaries of three contiguous municipalities or provinces. The Armed Forces considers a GF a priority for clearing if the CPP/NPA units in the area are active and strong, otherwise it considers them secondary or nonpriority. A GF is normally covered by at least one NPA Guerrilla Unit usually consisting of a platoon with 15 or more members and a militia consisting of local villagers who are either armed or unarmed but gives support to the insurgency movement and is ready to fight with them when needed. The regular NPA Guerrilla Unit breaks up into propaganda units called *Samahang Yunit Propaganda* (SYP) usually into groups of three members and continues its organizing and propaganda work to build up strength within the front and close by villages.

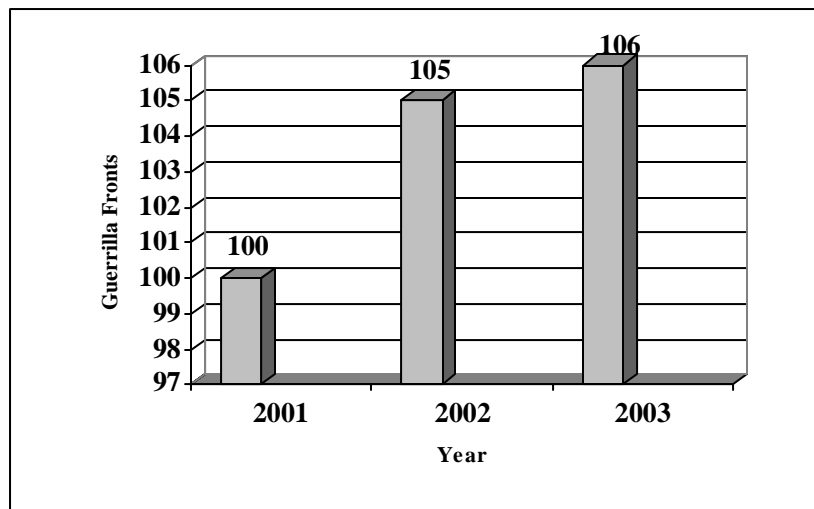


Figure 2. Trend in CPP/NPA Guerrilla Fronts

Source: *Analysis and Assessment of CY 2002-2003 SOT Operations* (Philippines: 2004).

SOTs are normally focused on affected villages in priority fronts, but they are also conducted in affected villages in secondary and nonpriority GFs. Often, the Armed Forces is unable to conduct SOTs in all of the affected villages at the same time. This is due to a lack of sufficient trained SOT personnel and resources. As the Division directs a battalion to conduct massive SOTs in a priority GF most often SOT personnel from other battalions in secondary GFs would have to be pulled out to augment the SOT in priority GFs. Meanwhile, there is also a need for other soldiers to be present to conduct security operations in the villages undergoing SOT.

While the soldiers conduct SOTs, the SYPs in the area either transfer to another affected village or go to a less protected or unaffected village to conduct their organizing activities. Whenever they have the chance, the SYPs group together to conduct an offensive against SOT soldiers, usually by ambushing them. After intensive SOTs, there is a chance that the Armed Forces may have weakened a GF, but the CPP/NPA handled this by combining GFs together to form a new unit. This happened once in the year 2002 when intensive SOT operations in the Southern Luzon Command contributed to the merging of two GFs. Oftentimes the GF stays with a new composition of affected villages consisting of the remaining affected villages together with new affected ones or ones which have been recovered after the soldiers left and no sufficient local security was established.

Dismantling a GF takes more than clearing CPP/NPA-affected villages. The Armed Forces SOT is not sufficient. First, an SOT is not conceptualized to dismantle a guerrilla front. It is designed to clear CPP/NPA-affected villages, but even then its

effectiveness in urban villages is being challenged and also in rural villages which have already undergone an SOT previously.

A GF has a different structure than a CPP/NPA-affected village. It has regular CPP/NPA military units composed of ideologues who are armed and trained and know their way around the areas. To dismantle a guerrilla front the CPP/NPA Guerrilla Units operating in the area have to be neutralized. Although the military units conduct combat operations during SOTs, the actions were mostly for the purpose of providing security to SOT personnel. On the other hand, NPA units purposely avoid encounters with soldiers to preserve their composition and be able to continue mass base building. The Armed Forces should intensify in deliberately conducting operations to search and destroy the NPA units in the GF. An effective *Barangay Intelligence Network* (BIN) can help a lot in finding them. It is also worthy to dismantle secondary GFs in areas of tactical or strategic importance in order that they will be contained early before they grow in strength and significance.

Clearing By Neutralizing the Enemy

The other primary role of the Armed Forces in the clearing phase is neutralizing the CPP/NPA forces. Table 3 shows the CPP/NPA members neutralized by the Armed Forces classified as Regular, Mass Base and Unidentified. In the year 2004, a total of 1,219 CPP/NPA members were neutralized – 276 Regular (Party members), 334 Mass Base and 609 Unidentified.

Table 3. Neutralized CPP/NPA Categorization (2004)			
	Killed	Captured/Arrested	Surrendered
Regular	69	3	122
Mass Base	3	24	307
Unidentified	124	157	328

Source: The Government's Counterinsurgency Campaign: The "Bantay Laya" and the National Peace Plan in Review (Philippines: 2005).

Although there is an increasing trend in the number of CPP/NPA members and affiliates neutralized by the Armed Forces (table 4), still the figures are not satisfactory in so far as curbing and defeating the insurgency movement is concerned.

Table 4. Neutralized CPP/NPA Members						
Year	Killed	Wounded	Arrested	Surrendered	Captured	Total
2001	184	75	48	100	-	407
2002	171	54	169	112	15	521
2003	150	23	159	216	50	598

Source: The Government's Counterinsurgency Campaign: The "Bantay Laya" and the National Peace Plan in Review (Philippines: 2005).

The present state of combat operations by the Armed Forces is not efficient enough, considering that the Armed Forces was not able to neutralize so much guerrilla forces that would significantly reduce the strength of the communist insurgents. And also by the fact that there is no decline in the number of guerrilla fronts despite the number of enemy neutralized and clearing of affected villages.

Careful attention should also be given to CPP/NPA insurgency activities in urban centers and the government response thereto. The Armed Forces Assessment for CY

2004 includes the following relevant information with regard to the National Capital Region Command (NCRC) as follows: two SOT conducted; five incidents initiated by the NCRC, three initiated by the insurgents; one CPP/NPA killed; and one high powered firearm gained by the NCRC from NPA. The NCRC conducts counterinsurgency efforts typical of how the military conducts it in the countryside - through SOT. It is doubtful whether SOT activities will have the same impact on urban dwellers as they have on people in the rural areas considering insurgents operate in a different manner in the urban centers. While they persuade and intimidate people in the countryside, they do not come out in the open in the metropolis but blend in and infiltrate associations and put up civic organizations to initiate mass actions against the government and get media attention to express anti-government sentiments. Clearing by psychological operations in the urban areas must take a different form because SOTs would not be suitable.

Hold Phase

The establishment of the Integrated Territorial Defense System (ITDS) starts during the Holding Stage where initial gains of clearing forces through occupation and control of cleared and adjacent areas are preserved and the local defense system is strengthened. The National Police and the Armed Forces through its operating units together with the CAFGUs shall hold on and control the area to protect the community from enemy depredations and terrorism. This includes the organization and operation of civilian volunteer organizations which shall constitute the unarmed component of the local defense forces. These volunteer organizations are the responsibility of the local government units. The effective integration of the efforts of these three components shall guarantee the defense and security of the area.

Generally, the CAFGUs are very effective in maintaining security and defense over the territories where they operate. Normally, insurgents keep away from villages with CAFGUs knowing that there are government intelligence networks in the area and members of the CAFGUs could easily detect their presence and identify them. CAFGU members being residents of the community know the people in their neighborhood. Besides, some of them were formerly members of the insurgency movement or its political groundwork. CAFGUs are armed, and they feel empowered by each other's presence and sense of duty to protect their families and community.

Local government units prefer the presence of CAFGUs whether their villages have undergone clearing, been threatened by CPP/NPA elements, or remain uninfluenced. But inasmuch as the Department of National Defense would also like to organize CAFGUs where needed, it is constrained to do so due to lack of funds. From 1997 to 2002 its annual budget for CAFGU is enough only for 42,748 members. An increase was granted by Congress which facilitated an addition of 10,000 members. All 42,748 were already fielded even before 2002, while the additional 10,000 were all deployed in 2003. As of 2003, there were villages which have been recently cleared and others which have long been cleared but do not have CAFGUs in the areas.

Under the NISP, a village which had been cleared should have ITDS set in place to hold the gains in the area while the government performs the other stages of SHA to complete the process of permanently ridding these communities of insurgents. While the CAFGU is not the only component of the local defense system, almost always in a local government unit which has it, the CAFGU comprises the whole territorial defense system of many villages in the local government unit. Apparently, with the CAFGU around there

is no problem in effecting the Hold strategy. So, what happens to the villages which, until a budget is approved for them, will not have the benefits of a CAFGU located in their area? And what happens to the Hold operation of the methodology?

With the CAFGUs around, the National Police and the local government unit both under the Department of Interior and Local Government should take active roles in setting up and maintaining an effective ITDS. Without the CAFGU, it should exert more effort. It seems, however, that many civilian officers of the government have not yet fully realized that they need to engage in a direct participation in counterinsurgency measures such as building a defense system against the works of communist insurgents. They seem to connect insurgency and defense only as the job of the military.

Until this time, there is no model ITDS or clear-cut guidelines on how an ITDS will be set up with or without CAFGUs. There are no provisions for recruitment, training or plans connected with preparation for setting up an ITDS.

The Armed Forces, however, takes the initiative to form a territorial defense system, but the systems vary according to how the commander in the area deals with the situation. Putting up an ITDS in support of the Hold phase, although mandatory by executive order under the NISP and out of necessity, had been discretionary and optional, since setting it up was left to the ability and will of the military commander in the area, such that he may or may not form it. In some cases, without allocation of additional CAFGU, battalion commanders are constrained to leave behind some of their forces in a newly cleared village. This situation ties up forces of the battalion which could otherwise be used for combat operations or to support another SOT activity.

The establishment of an ITDS in this case also depends on the leadership of the local government units. LGUs with strong leaders and those with more sources of income and civic-minded populace find it easier to help themselves and create a territorial defense system with the help of the military, the police and civilian volunteer organizations. There are many LGUs, however, with minimal resources and capabilities when left on their own.

Consolidate Phase

The Consolidate Stage involves the collaborative participation of the military, the police, and the civilian government agencies and instrumentalities, and the people themselves to strengthen and consolidate government control and authority in cleared areas. This stage includes stepping up of activities to assist the local government in the delivery of basic services and gain the people's trust and confidence to motivate the populace to collectively bind themselves in self defense against the insurgent threat and strongly assert the control and authority of the government in the locality.

At present, there are no specific types of operations or activities in the Consolidate phase. It speaks about the village being in a state of full government control, about its efforts to bring about the people's expectations from the government like delivery of basic services and rallying together of the government agencies and the different sectors of society to overcome the root causes of insurgency identified in the area. In the Consolidate phase the community is being prepared to strongly take a stand against the insurgents and to welcome the government's efforts.

Develop Phase

The Department of Social Welfare and Development (DSWD) is the lead convenor for the socioeconomic and psychosocial component of the SHA. The government believes that if it will bring the development and change that people are hoping for and looking forward to, they will not be deceived, choose to sympathize or join the communist movement and be strong enough to resist or fight the insurgents.

The government's Strategy of Holistic Approach concludes with developing the villages which have been rid of communist insurgents' control or influence. The Armed Forces record shows that between 2002 and 2003 there were a total of 742 villages which have cleared and validated. Out of these, 145 villages or 20 percent were provided with KALAHY-CIDSS development projects by the DSWD. The type of projects include construction of school buildings, farm-to-market roads and irrigation systems, provision of health insurance to land reform beneficiaries, information and social advocacy projects, and quick response to human and basic services needs in very remote areas, among others. Table 5 shows where and how many projects were installed in the area.

Table 5. KALAHY Programs by Area					
Year	Northern/Central Luzon	Southern Luzon	Visayas	Mindanao	Total
2001	0	0	0	2	2
2002-2003	33	35	29	19	145

Source: Analysis and Assessment of CY 2002-2003 SOT Operations (Philippines: 2004).

Of the villages cleared, 597 or 80 percent were left hanging, uncertain whether or not the government has a project for them. Launched in January, 2003 KALAH-CIDSS has started projects in 1,503 poor villages in 67 municipalities and 22 provinces nationwide. Only 145 or 9.6 percent went to the villages cleared by the Armed Forces through SOT. The rest were taken to other poor villages, although these villages may not have been one of those previously or currently affected by the insurgency movement.

The reason the KALAH-CIDSS projects were taken somewhere else is because the destination of all KALAH-CIDSS projects were already pre-determined. The DSWD selected 4,270 villages in 177 municipalities spread across 42 of the poorest provinces in the country. The villages were chosen after a technical study had been made considering the following indicators: income, food, clothing, shelter, disaster vulnerability and citizens' participation. Noticeably, the state of being previously under the influence of communist insurgents and then cleared of such influence is not one of the criteria.

Although the KALAH-CIDSS projects were not specifically created to provide development projects to cleared villages under the government C-H-C-D counterinsurgency method, there is a misconception even among the different government Departments that it was so. Because these were the only DSWD projects implemented in cleared villages and in a way comply with the Develop phase or complete the C-H-C-D methodology, even if they do so only incidentally, assuming that all or some of the 145 villages likewise put up the ITDS in conformity with the Hold phase.

The DSWD has no program deliberately intended to promote the counterinsurgency plan outlined in the NISP. But then, although tasked as the lead covenantor for the Socioeconomic and Psycho-social Component of the insurgency problem,

this Department is not the only government agency required to actively participate in the Develop Stage. The National Anti-Poverty Commission, National Economic Development Authority, Department of Health, Department of Agriculture, Department of Agrarian Reform, Department of Public Works and Highways, Department of National Defense, Department of Interior and Local Government, and the Office of the Presidential Adviser on Peace Process, as members, are all expected to address insurgency in the Develop Stage.

The Develop Stage calls for the implementation of the government's socioeconomic, psychosocial and political reforms which include the sustained delivery of basic human development services to the people to address the root causes of insurgency. The range of services the cleared villages may need actually call for a combination of some or all of the services of the aforementioned Departments like school, health services, land reform programs or subsidies. It is also the intention of the government during the Develop phase that the community should feel empowered by giving them opportunity and active participation in the discussions, review of options and selection of development projects and activities that would affect the community. This way the people in the community will have positive interaction, involvement and commitment with the government.

Even recognizing the fact that these Departments have limited resources, still at least, they must create a program which they should tailor for a cleared village, as answer to the government counterinsurgency effort that can be implemented as the budget permits. Planning by a Department for the implementation of a development program brings about recognition of the need for such a project and the eventual implementation

thereof and completion of the C-H-C-D. It seems, at present, everybody is relying on the Department of Social Welfare and Development while the other Departments have yet to focus their attention in taking deliberate participation in effecting the government counterinsurgency plan.

There is no accurate record of all actual government programs of the different Departments that may have come to these cleared villages, although may be not deliberately as an implementation of the Develop Stage, but nevertheless brought about some of the desired benefits against insurgency.

On the other hand, the Armed Forces may be known to play a supporting role to the civilian government in so far as the Develop phase is concerned, yet, it has civil military operations that have a direct impact in the community relative to development and against insurgency.

Most of the military psychological and civic operations in Table 6 were conducted in conjunction with SOTs. These types of operations are normally conducted during SOTs to establish rapport with the communities, get to know them, get their trust and confidence and make them feel that the government exists and cares for them. They help the military in making the SOT successful while at the same time they provide the community with development services.

Table 6. Civil Military Operations
Psychological Operations
50,903 PsyOps activities conducted and 1,198,770 propaganda materials distributed
Civic Action
4,268 medical & dental services granted to 630,415 beneficiaries

1,929 activities of disaster relief & rescue assistance granted to 384,741 beneficiaries
Infrastructure Development
15.38 kms of roads
512 linear meters of bridge
3.2 kms flood control
79 units school buildings
300 units of core shelter
P37,491,485.74 worth of construction projects
Environmental Protection
15,193 assorted trees planted/12 coastal/river clean-up/1,500 mangroves

Source: Analysis and Assessment of CY 2002-2003 SOT Operations (Philippines: 2004).

The infrastructure development and environmental protection projects are invaluable. There are areas where these projects are highly needed, but because of problems in security and peace and order, civilian workers are unable to perform them. In which case, construction and implementation of these projects enumerated in Table 6 by the military produce a high score for both the government and the military in the villages benefited by these development projects.

Coordination and Integration of the C-H-C-D Efforts

With the characteristics of the government Strategy of Holistic Approach, coordination and integration of efforts by all the participants are indispensable to the Strategy's success. The synergy resulting from the coordinated efforts of all government actions will bring about the impact required to defeat insurgency. Conversely, lack of coordination and integration of efforts will dampen the momentum gained and deaden the impetus to destroy the enemy. For instance, the accomplishments of the Armed Forces in the clearing phase will be nullified if the rest of the stages will not follow at the tempo they are needed.

The NISP provided for the creation of the Oversight Committee on Internal Security (OCIS) with specification of its duties and functions and the sub-committees to perform them to orchestrate and oversee the implementation of the SHA and its elements in defeating insurgency. The OCIS was abolished by the Office of the President in September, 2004 and replaced by the Cabinet Cluster on National Security with an organizational structure different from the OCIS, but the OCIS has no record of any comprehensive counterinsurgency plans, programs or projects implemented or to be implemented by the Departments concerned in compliance with the NISP.

CHAPTER 6

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Through more than five decades, the communist insurgency in the Philippines has undergone transformations to reorganize and reorient the movement aimed at adapting to the changing times and to gain strength and force in fighting the Government. The CPP managed to create organizations purportedly performing works with legal purposes while agitating the people against the government and raising funds locally and abroad. It even assimilated itself into Philippine society through the elections and participates in parliamentary procedures by means of its front organizations. It is also known that there are left-leaning officials sitting in government posts. After almost being deserted in the late 80s and early 90s the CPP/NPA is back intensifying its efforts in the mass base and making a steady increase.

The past government administrations responded to insurgency by applying different principles and methods. Insurgency had grown and decreased with them. To address insurgency, the present administration is focusing on what it recognizes as its causes and has developed the Strategy of Holistic Approach to defeat insurgency. The NISP discusses the means of implementing the Strategy of Holistic Approach. It stresses coordination and integration; creation of policies, programs and projects; and the need for cooperation and interest of the various government agencies, non-government organizations and citizens. The NISP talks about a practical and feasible plan to solve the insurgency problem but there is no strong government machinery yet to start it working well.

Insurgency should be fought both on the priority fronts and secondary and non-priority fronts. But while the SHA calls for the application of the C-H-C-D operational methodology in the priority fronts there are no comprehensive plans, programs and projects by the government Departments as to how the C-H-C-D will be implemented with the coordination and integration required in the NISP to be an effective counterinsurgency measure. Neither are there comprehensive plans, programs, projects and coordination on how SHA will be carried out on secondary fronts and non-priority fronts.

But although the NISP discusses that each government Department that has to take an active part in filling the gaps and overhauling a system in a society should know their roles and duties in the counterinsurgency effort, this study found that government implementers or what the NISP calls stakeholders are not as coordinated and integrated as they should be. They need to realize the significance of their parts and to be deliberate in delivering their services to achieve the intended results. The lack of plans and programs by the Departments involved affects the effectiveness of the overall counterinsurgency efforts and gives unsatisfactory results.

On the other hand, the Armed Forces which is very active in this struggle, needs to review and revise its concepts of operation and courses of action in fighting insurgency, which it should do after assessing and analyzing its past performance by implementing the Bantay-Laya under the NISP, vis-à-vis the insurgents' performance.

The Armed Forces has focused too much on conducting SOTs in the last three and a half years that the NISP was in effect, but it did not bring down the number or opportunity of the CPP to influence and establish politico-military mass base in many

villages nor eliminated guerrilla fronts and reduced their strength. Their efforts were matched by the CPP/NPA in terms of expansion to villages where the presence of the Government is weak. The insurgents were thus able to maintain the number of their guerrilla fronts and their strength.

The Armed Forces should devise an operations plan focusing on the other aspects of clearing that only the military can perform, such as neutralizing the insurgents and building a more reliable intelligence network. These are more significant missions for the Armed Forces than SOT. While the process of conducting SOTs is such that they can be performed by the police and civilians, combat operations is a job only for the military.

A SOT is a psychological operation directed at dismantling the political mass base and organizations of the insurgents in villages and winning back the local populace to the side of the government. The local police and civilian personnel both under the Local Government Unit (LGU) where the villages belong, together with relevant Government agencies like the Departments of Agrarian Reform, Social Welfare and Services and Health and other non-government agencies, with proper training from the Armed Forces can perform SOT-type activities as part of the clearing phase. Local Government people working in the villages would also be very meaningful. In this way, the villagers would have direct contact with the LGU and feel a sense of importance and being cared for by the government, while on the other hand, the LGU would be able to establish good relations with the community and win their cooperation and trust and find out firsthand the situation in the areas. This preliminary contact and bonding would also be important in conducting successfully the next three phases of the SHA. Moreover, the civilian operators, being local residents in the general community where the target

villages also belong, would be expected to relate well with the populace to accomplish their SOT mission efficiently by having a natural understanding of the peculiarities and sensitivities of the local community. Intelligence that will be gathered by the police during the civilian SOT operation and thereafter will be shared by them with the military in the course of the regular coordination and integration expected to take place.

In this way the number of military personnel that will be relieved from doing SOT work can be optimized to perform combat and other military operations. Likewise, the performance of SOT will not be too dependent on the availability of military personnel available to conduct it. As it is now, since they are always busy with other duties and not enough of them are available in all places where they are needed for SOT or otherwise, the SOT target is not satisfactorily met.

The Armed Forces should concentrate its efforts in combat, intelligence and psychological operations to dismantle guerrilla fronts and clear villages and provinces of their control and influence. By neutralizing the enemy the government will be able to weaken the communist movement, arrest its growth and expansion and eventually defeat them. It was seen that even while hundreds of villages were already cleared of communist influence, hundreds more replace them, and that by neutralizing only a few, the movement is able to increase.

Destroying the enemy is what will prevent them from going to the people. With the CPP/NPA regulars operating in the area neutralized, the communist movement will be handicapped since there will no longer be party members and elements to go back to the formerly influenced villages to intimidate the locals, to penetrate new villages to recruit and expand its control, to train new recruits, and to perform their regular extortion

and terroristic activities. By taking out leaders and members of the CPP/NPA, the government will undermine the capability of the insurgents to expand politico-military infrastructures and build and maintain guerrilla fronts. Neutralizing the enemy more than conducting SOT is the military component in the counter-expansion and dismantling of guerrilla fronts. But this is not to say that they should not continue with civic operations which bring them closer to and endear them to the locals.

Another difficult aspect of counterinsurgency which the military should concentrate on is intelligence operations. An efficient and reliable intelligence system always yields productive results. In the past, CPP/NPA top brass were captured, and many were forced to surrender because of good intelligence work.

The Armed Forces Counterinsurgency Assessment for CY 2004 reports that it took 549 combat operations to yield one tactical encounter. The present rate is reflective of an incompetent intelligence system and unproductive combat operations causing tremendous losses to military resources in terms of money, time and energy. Intelligence is the best source to look for known and unknown enemies operating and hiding in known and unknown places. Devoting so much of the intelligence funds to intelligence operations can bring about favorable results because there have always been insurgent members or non-member informants who are willing to do high risk jobs for money. However, they should be handled well by highly competent and trained intelligence military officers.

At the same time, the Armed Forces National Capital Region Command should also make a careful review of its operations in the metropolitan areas. Its counterinsurgency operations should be perceptive and cogent, directly targeting the

insurgency activities. It can organize counter organizations to neutralize the anti-government activities of infiltrated organizations and train civilian agents to perform recruitment for its pro government activities and for intelligence.

Equally important is the military's ability to intensify psychological operations tailored to the local settings where the insurgents operate. The military should not let up on psychological operations against the insurgents in preparation for the clearing, while the clearing is on going, or even after. Efficient psychological operations will weaken the morale of the insurgents to fight the government and stay in the communist movement. Old and new insurgent members should be targeted. One way is to expose the evils of communism and corruptions in the national and local communist movement. It will be easier for the military to neutralize enemy forces if the enemy doubts its ability to win and thinks that fighting is fruitless. The Armed Forces should be able to break the will and spirit of the enemy. Then they will be easier to neutralize, while others will be forced to willingly surrender.

Ideally, clearing both by the military and the civilian agencies (as recommended here) should be timed so that when the other phases of the SHA are also ready for implementation the whole strategy will be completed and will ensure its success in the target area. However, given the present circumstances which make proper coordination and synchronization of the four phases not fully operational, it is doubtful whether clearing should be undertaken, while the other phases such as putting up development projects cannot be executed yet. The military strongly believes that clearing of villages on priority fronts should take place whether or not the other phases are ready for execution. However, the military should plan operations that it should conduct by targeting

insurgents while the Departments concerned are preparing for implementation of the C-H-C-D successively.

On the other hand, the Government should make a conscious effort to effectuate a system of coordination and integration of the different Departments and the non-government sectors of society in relation to targeting insurgency. These entities do have significant roles in effecting the Strategy of Holistic Approach, especially in the areas of cooperation and intelligence in the Clearing phase; territorial defense and security in the Hold phase; participation in community socioeconomic and psychosocial endeavors of the national and local governments in the Consolidation phase; and bringing about significant, real and long-term change in the Development phase.

At present, there are Departments doing their jobs which contribute to the SHA effort but since there is no effective and efficient coordination and integration among these government and non-government entities their efforts either produce little or fail to produce the overall intended results. Isolated efforts will not bring about the impact needed to arrest the effects and causes of insurgency. Coordination and integration of actions is a serious business which should be given close attention by an able government body orchestrating and overseeing that everybody's efforts will generate the synergy and collaboration needed to surmount the challenges facing the country.

It should be noted that in reality, however, as much as the Government would like to support all counterinsurgency programs and in all areas where they are needed, it is constrained in doing so. These counterinsurgency programs are ordinarily non-revenue, and only so much of the government funds can be allocated to these types of programs. The unfortunate fact is that no matter how excellent and impressive the government

counterinsurgency plans and programs may be, if there are no funds to support them, the show will not run.

While funds may be limited, putting them to wise use will still produce significant results. For this reason it can be seen why a coordinating body is very important. It has to space out and properly time all the different programs for all four stages of the SHA, such that when money, time and effort were put together they will create an impact.

Conversely, if money, time and effort are not coordinated and the phasing of program implementation is not regulated, any positive effects will be diluted and will not bring about the impact necessary to extirpate insurgency in the target area.

The Philippine Government Strategy of Holistic Approach against communist insurgency is both ingenious and viable. It is a call to action to all agencies of the Government, organizations of the private sector and citizens of a country who love democracy. But without strong leadership and serious implementation, insurgency might grow larger and continue to thrive.

APPENDIX A.

SURVEY QUESTIONS

Directions: Please accomplish this questionnaire carefully and honestly. Rest assured that your anonymity and the information that you will give will be treated with the strictest confidentiality.

Name: _____

Unit: _____

Designation: _____

1. Do you think the CPP/NPA is still the primary threat to national security?
_____ Yes _____ No _____ Not Sure
2. How long have you been involved in the implementation of the AFP's counterinsurgency effort? _____
3. The AFP is primarily responsible in the Clear and Hold phases of the Clear, Hold, Consolidate, Develop (CHCD) methodology of the government's Strategy of Holistic Approach (SHA) and the SOT concept is its primary program to accomplish its task? Do you think the AFP's SOT concept is still effective? _____ Yes _____ No _____ Not Sure
4. Do you think the Clear-Hold-Consolidate-Develop (CHCD) methodology of the government's counterinsurgency strategy is effective in addressing the communist insurgency? _____ Yes _____ No _____ Not Sure

5. In what phase or stage is the methodology weakest in terms of effectiveness?(Please rank from 1 to 4 with 1 being the weakest and 4 strongest)
- a. ____ Clear
 - b. ____ Hold
 - c. ____ Consolidate
 - d. ____ Develop
6. What are the problems that hinder the effectiveness of the methodology?
(please rank from 1 to 4 with 1 being the main problem and 4 as the least)
- a. ____ Weak coordination/support between government agencies involved
 - b. ____ Lack of funding/logistics
 - c. ____ Lack of effective agency programs (lead agencies)
 - d. ____ Lack of manpower
7. What are the other problems not mentioned in no. 5 which hinder the CHCD methodology and the overall COIN campaign from being effective?
-
8. What are your recommendations to make the methodology and the overall COIN strategy effective?
-

Thank you very much for answering this questionnaire.

APPENDIX B.

INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

The purpose of this interview is to get direct feedback from battalion commanders, either currently serving or have done their tour of duty, on the implementation of the government's Strategy of Holistic Approach (SHA) using the operational methodology of Clear-Hold-Consolidate-Develop. The author makes an assumption that the SHA and the Operational methodology of C-H-C-D are viable strategies to counter terrorism. However, the problem seems to be in the implementation of the major programs for each of the phase in the methodology. The three major programs identified are the following: the SOT for the clear phase; the CAFGU for the Hold phase; and, the KALAH I for the Develop phase. There is no major program per se in the consolidate phase as this stage only provides the agencies involved to consolidate gains and prepare for the Develop phase.

Hereunder are the interview questions:

On SOT,

1. Who sets the priority in determining which villages are to be cleared in a battalion AOR?
2. How many villages are required of a battalion to clear for a quarter or a year? On the average, how many days does it take for a SOT unit to accomplish the task of clearing a village?
3. Does your unit have the capability to accomplish on time the requirements set forth by your higher headquarters in terms of clearing villages? Do you have

- enough manpower or trained SOT personnel? Do you have funding for SOT activities and are they enough and received on time?
4. How do you assess the SOT concept? Do you believe it is an effective concept in the clearing of villages? What do you recommend to make it more effective?
- On CAFGU,
1. Who is responsible for establishing a CAFGU in newly cleared villages? What is the role of the battalion in the holding phase and in the establishment of CAFGU?
 2. Does establishment of CAFGU always follow the clearing of villages in your AOR? How many CAFGUs were actually established after villages were cleared of insurgents (please indicate the time period covered by your data)?
 3. What happen to the cleared villages where the government fails to establish CAFGU? Do they revert back to CPP/NPA influence? If not, how do you preserve the gains in the clearing phase?
 4. Are there CAFGU units established in areas not previously influenced by the insurgents? Why and what necessitates establishing CAFGUs in those areas?
 5. How do you assess the effective of CAFGUs in protecting villages? Are they able to keep the insurgents away from the villages? Do they have enough training?
 6. What do you recommend to further improve the Hold Phase of the operational methodology in general and the CAFGU system in particular?
- On KALAH I
1. The KALAH I program of the DSWD is the primary program of the department on addressing poverty, one of the root causes of insurgency, at the village level.

- As a battalion commander, do you have enough knowledge of this program and how it is implemented in your AOR?
2. The implementation of KALAH I projects have been criticized by some senior officers as not supporting or following the C-H-C-D methodology thereby putting to waste whatever gains the AFP units have gained in the clearing and holding phase. How do you see this as a battalion commander in the field? Are KALAH I projects being implemented in your AOR directly supporting the gains in the clear and hold phases? Or KALAH I projects are implemented elsewhere for some political or obscure reasons?
 3. How effective is interagency coordination among the agencies participating in the counterinsurgency campaign of the government, if such exist? Does everyone involved knowledgeable of the NISP, the government's strategic plan to defeat insurgency? Do you know of any participating agencies in counterinsurgency that have their own implementing plans in support of the NISP?
 4. What do you recommend to improve interagency coordination in general and the implementation of the KALAH I projects in particular?

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